(c) the steps taken to restore the telecommunication system at Paradip, Jagatsingpur and other Cyclone affected district?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) 300 Telephone Exchanges were damaged due to super cyclone in Orissa.

(b) Rs. 107 Crores (approximately).

(c) Immediate steps were taken to restore the long distance trunk routes by re-engineering and rerouting the circuits wherever possible. In other inaccessible district Headquarters, the telecommunication facilities were provided by deploying Satellite phones. Thereafter, works to restore telecommunications facility have been taken up on war footing giving priorities to District Head Quarters/ Sub-divisional Headquarters and other important telecommunication facilities. 232 exchanges have since been restored. STD to all affected district Headquarters and Tehsil Headquarters have also been restored. Only 68 exchanges, which are deep inside the villages are pending for restoration. These exchanges are likely to be restored during December progressively. Telecom Services at Bhubaneshwar, Dhenkanal, Anandpur, Cuttack, Khurda, Puri, Kendrapara, Jagatsingpur, Balasore, Bhadrak and Jajpur were restored by 07-11-1999 in a phased manner.

Setting up of New Telephone Exchanges in Orissa

671. SHRI BHAGABAN MAJHI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal under the consideration of Government to set up new telephone exchanges in Orissa;

(b) whether these telephone exchanges are in addition to the existing damaged exchanges due to cyclone; and

(c) if so, the details of the proposals of Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) Yes Sir.

(c) 33 new telephone exchanges are proposed to be set up during 1999-2000 out of which 10 have been commissioned.

Losses to Basic and Cellular Licensees due to High Licence Fee

672. SHRI NILOTPAL BASU:
SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the existing licensees for both basic and cellular services had represented before Government that they were incurring heavy losses due to high licence fees as per their contractual obligations; and

(b) if so, the details of the financial memorandum of each of these companies indicating their investment, operational cost, number of subscribers, average share prices, at which off-loaded, if any, and profit/loss year-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) Sir, Basic Service licensees made representation against delay in implementation of their projects on account of the delays in permissions/approvals from concerned Government agencies. The Cellular operators and their association have represented that their projects were not financially viable due, *inter alia*, to high licence fee quoted by them.

(b) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the house.

Migration of Private Licensees from Licence Fee Regime

673. SHRI NILOTPAL BASU:
SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the report by the Group on Telecom submitted on 26th March, 1999 ruled categorically against the migration of the existing private licensees from the licence fee regime to the revenue sharing arrangement under NTP '99 which was accepted by Government; and